



AAC Publications

Peak 11,300', West Face, Right Couloir; Reality Peak, West Face, Devil's Advocate

Alaska, Central Alaska Range

Willis Brown, Sam Hennessey, and I climbed two sustained ice and mixed routes in the West Fork of the Ruth Glacier between May 11 and 21.

From May 13–14 we tried to climb the longest and most direct line available on the west face of Peak 11,300', beginning with a three-pitch "sit start" (M4, M5, M4). [These initial pitches could be avoided by an easier snow and ice gully just left.] Above this, a few hundred feet of snow brought us to three pitches of ice-filled gullies (85°). Another long stretch of steep snow put us below the upper headwall. We climbed this section in three rope lengths, with ice up to 90°. On the final 400' to the summit ridge, the angle eased (70°). The weather started to deteriorate when we reached the ridge. We climbed three rope lengths through extensive cornices and decided to turn around below the summit, around 11,100'. We rappelled through the night with much spindrift (about 20 double-rope rappels). It should be noted that we found an oval carabiner on a fixed nut two-thirds of the way up the route, so it's possible this route has been attempted or climbed in the past, though a climb hasn't been reported. The route is excellent and should be repeated.

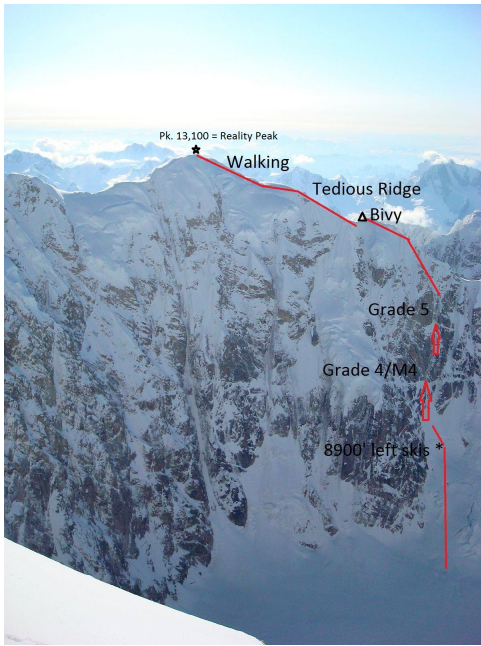
[Editor's Note: Thomas Kimbrell and Jeep Gaskin climbed the above-mentioned route in April 1983 and called it Right Couloir. This route was previously unreported. Thomas notes that John Bauman and Jim Howe climbed a route just right of theirs soon afterward, which is noted in AAJ 1984, and that both teams had harrowing experiences on their respective routes.]

After a few days of rest, we skied up the pocket glacier that separates Peak 13,100', "Reality Peak," from Denali's Isis Face. We found a great-looking line on the west face of Reality Peak and returned to camp to pack. Starting on May 18, we crossed the bergschrund around ca 8,900' and then climbed 500' of perfect névé. This brought us to the first ice pitch. From here we climbed steep, continuous ice for ten rope lengths, two of which had vertical ice. Once out of these steeper gullies, the angle eased slightly for the final 600' until we joined the heavily corniced Reality Ridge (ca 12,000'). Steep snow tunneling and ice traversing got us to the same comfortable bivy I had used during the first ascent of Reality Face (AAJ 2013). At 10 p.m. we all crammed into our two-man tent for some rest.

The next day had poor weather, but we hung tight, and the following morning things cleared up. Steep snow and some funky ice along the ridge took about six hours. We topped out Peak 13,100', reversed the ridge, brewed up in our tent, and then started the descent of the face. It was possible to rappel most of the route, with the exception of the ridge above and below our bivy (about 18 double-rope rappels from V-threads and some downclimbing). This is an exceptional route: Devil's Advocate (4,200', AI5 M4).

– Seth Timpano

Images



The west face of Peak 13,100', "Reality Peak," as seen from the Isis Face. Devil's Advocate (4,200', AI5 M4) follows the red line.



A foreshortened view of the west face of Peak 13,100', "Reality Peak," as seen from the pocket glacier below. Devil's Advocate (4,200', AI5 M4) follows the red line.



Climbing along the Reality Ridge to the summit of Peak 13,100', "Reality Peak," completing the first ascent of Devil's Advocate (4,200', AI5 M4) up Reality Peak's west side.



The west face of Peak 11,300 showing the Right Couloir (1983) and the new "sit start."

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